

**REMARKS**

Claims 4-8 are pending in the present application. Claims 4-8 are herein amended. No new matter has been entered. Applicants appreciate the courtesy extended by Examiner Self in a telephone interview conducted on January 11, 2007 ("the Examiner Interview"). Applicants separate record of the subject matter of the interview is incorporated into the remarks below. It is respectfully submitted that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated November 28, 2006.

**Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §112**

Claims 4-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's basis for rejection. However, to expedite prosecution, Applicants herein amend claims 4-8 to clarify the present invention. Accordingly, in view of such amendments, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the §112 rejection of claims 4-8.

**Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102**

Claims 4-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by *Mutsuura et al.* (5,582,224). However, in view of the aforementioned amendments to claim 4, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection is no longer supported by *Mutsuura et al.*. Accordingly, in view of this amendment and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the §102 rejection of claims 4-7.

Anticipation requires the disclosure in a single prior art reference of each and EVERY element of the claimed invention, arranged as in the claim. Here, *Mutsuura et al.* does NOT disclose, teach, or even suggest a log centering apparatus that includes *a plurality of beam reflection scanners mounted on a support frame of said log centering apparatus and disposed at a plurality of positions along the horizontal axis of the log, wherein the detection direction of the beam reflection scanners are oriented toward the axis of the preliminary axles AND a plurality of contact-swinging detection members mounted on the support frame of said log centering apparatus.* See claim 4 (emphasis added.)

As clearly described in claim 4, the presently claimed invention requires **both** “contact swinging detection members” and “beam reflection scanners.” However, *Mutsuura* specifically teaches using non-contact detecting elements **instead** of the contact type detecting elements. See col. 3, lines 55-59; col. 7, lines 10-16; col. 8, lines 57-64 (“[T]he upper surface of the log 1 is detected by photoelectric type detectors with no contact. The detector, however, can be replaced with mechanical-contact type ones which are moved down and synchronized with the elevation of the log 1.”) Therefore, *Mutsuura* does not disclose or even reasonably suggest what is required by independent claim 4 of the present invention.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the anticipation rejection of claim 4.

Also, Applicants respectfully request that Examiner withdraw the anticipation rejection of dependent claims 5-8 for at least the reasons discussed above.

**Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102**

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Mutsumura*. However, claim 8 depends from claims 4 and should likewise be allowable by nature of dependency in view of the remarks above.

**Conclusion**

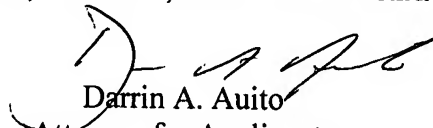
In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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